Self-Examination:

WITH

The likeliest means

OF

Conversion,

AND

Salvation.

OR,

Happy, and welcome advice, if it meets with a Soul ingenious.

The which being thought (by many) worth the transcribing, at no small charge: is now Published for the good of all.

By *R. FUNIUS.*

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IMPRIMATUR,

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Self-Examination: with the likelieſt means of *Converſion* and *Salvation*.

CHAP. I.

THoſe that are to paint or print a *pitcht field*, within the compaſs of a ſheet or two of paper, can make but few *Souldiers* whole and compleat; but are forced to ſet down for the moſt part, their *heads* only or their *helmets*. So I intending to ſay only enough of theſe Subjects, ſhall be brief, and but ſelect out here and there that which will make moſt for my purpoſe, and the *Readers* benefit.

It is the Abſtract of Religion, to imitate and obey him whom we profeſs to worſhip: neither are we worthy to be called *Chriſtians*, except we imitate *Chriſt*, and endeavour to frame our lives, according to the *Rules* which he hath preſcribed in his *Goſpel*. And why was the Name *Chriſtian* at firſt uſed, but to denominate the true *Diſciples* and *followers of Chriſt*, and to diſtinguiſh them from the *Heathen*? as appears, *Acts* 11.26. But now, (to our ſhame be it ſpoken), let any one compare mens lives with Chriſts life, or thoſe Rules which he hath given us: and he ſhall be forced to confeſs, that either the *Goſpel* is none of *Chriſts*, or few among us are *Chriſtians*. And yet there is ſcarce a man in the *Nation*, (be he never ſo vicious and wicked) but he will ſay he is a *Chriſtian*, and hopes to be ſaved by *Chriſt*, which alone may move wonder to aſtoniſhment! How much more, if we ſhall compare the numberleſs number of our great, and grievous abominations, wherewith our Land is filled from corner to corner, with the many and great *means* which *God* hath afforded for our reclaiming.

The principal end for which *man* was *created*, *after the Image of God*, and endowed with gifts and abilities, above all other *viſible creatures*; was, that we might honour, love, and ſerve our *Creator*, and enjoy communion and happineſs with him for ever. And for the ſame end alſo, did the only *Son of God* die, when we (by *eating the forbidden fruit*) had turned that *Image of God*, into the *Image of Satan*, being in reaſon paſt hope of recovery, even to *redeem us*, *out of the hands of our ſpiritual enemies*; *that we might ſerve our Creator and Redeemer*, according to thoſe precepts which he hath given us in his *Word*; *and to ſet forth the praiſe of him, who hath done all this for us*, Luke 1.73,74,75. *That we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him: That he might purge us, to be a peculiar people to himſelf, zealous of good workes: That we ſhould deny ungodlineſs, and worldly luſts: And that we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.* And withal, That we might enjoy everlaſting communion and happineſs, with our *Bleſſed Maker and Redeemer*, as the *Holy Ghoſt* ſets it down, *Eph.*1.4. *Tit.* 2.12,14. 1 *Pet.* 2.24. 2 *Tim.*2,19. *Pſal.*116,12,13,14.

But alas, moſt men know no other end of their *Creation*, but *Recreation*; no other end of their *Redemption*, but to ſatisfie their *luſts*, to *eat*, *drink*, *ſleep*, *ſin*, and make others to ſin; to purſue their *profit*, *pleaſure*, *honour*. This (as they ſuppoſe) is all that *Chriſt* expects from them: For this is the ſum of their *Lords Prayer*, *Creed*, and *Ten Commandments*. Whence (like *men ſleeping in a Boat*) they are carried down the *ſtream* of this *world*, until they arrive at their *Graveſend*, *Death*; without once *waking* to bethink themſelves, whether they are going to *Heaven* or *Hell*. So living like *Beaſts*, becauſe they think they ſhall *die like Beaſts*, and never give any account of what they have either *acted or left undone*. *The luſts of the fleſh*, *the luſt of the eyes*, *and the pride of life*, is all the *Trinity* that moſt men worſhip.

As for anſwering the end of our *Redemption*, which coſt no leſs a price than the *Bloud of Chriſt*, men do not at all mind it, or if they do, they apply *Chriſts Paſſion*, as a Warrant for their licentiouſneſs, not as a remedy; and take his death

as

as a license to sin, *his Cross* as a *Letters Patent* to do mischief, so *turning the grace of God into wantonness*; as if a man should *head his Drum of Rebellion with his Pardon.* As, O the *pride, covetousness, cruelty*, damnable *hypocrisie*, the cursed *swearing and cursing*, abominable and worse then beastlike *Drunkenness, adultery, lying, slandering, persecuting, contempt of Religion* and all goodness, *grinding of faces* like edged tools, *spilling of blood* like water, *racking of rents, detension of wages* and *workmens hire*, incredible *cruelty to servants, incloſing of Commons, ingroſſing of Commodities, griping Exactions*, with straining the advantages of greatness, *Unequal Levies of Legal payments, spiteful suits, griping usury, bribery, perjury, partiality, Treason and Rebellion, Sacriledge, simonaical contracts and soul-murther, scurrility*, and *prophanness, cousening in bargains, breaking of Promises, perfidious undermining, atheism*, and a world of the like. In so much, that there is scarce one of an hundred whose *knowledg*, belief, and *life*, is in any degree answerable to the *Gospel*. And so far are we from loving and serving *Christ*, that we hate and persecute those that do it, and that, for their so doing.

And (which does exceedingly aggravate our shame and wickedness) we have all vowed in our *Baptism*, to serve *Christ*, *taken Press money and great wages* of him to that end, *given Security* by *Sureties*, that we will fight against the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*: Yet in a most shameful manner (the most of us) have *renounced our Vow* made to him, *fled from his Standard*, and *fought for Satan* and the *World*: seeking to win all we could from *Christ*, by *tempting* to sin, and by *persecuting* such as we see better then our selves. Nor does our Vow in *Baptism* more aggravate our sin, then does the *great means* that *Christ* hath used, *to bring us out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* As why do we in this Land enjoy so much light and means of grace more then other people? Why hath *God* delivered us from *Paganism* and *Popery*, and revealed to us his *Word* so plainly and fully? Why hath *Christ* continued his *Gospel*, (the best of blessings) amongst us, more then hundred

years? with such supply of able *Ministers*, that no *Nation under Heaven* may compare with us. Yea when neither his *word*, *mercies*, nor any ordinary means would serve the turn; why hath he *at several times*, and *after sundry manners* visited us with several *judgments*, to try what they would do: but to invite and call us to *repentance*, and to mind us of our many engagements.

CHAP. II.

BUt wo is me! How few of us are the better for all? Yea what eies can but run over to see for the most part, what lives men lead?

The *Holy Ghost* tels us in the *Word*, and we hear the same daily, *That every man shall be judged according to his works, be they good or evil*, Rev. 20. 13. *That we shall give an account at the day of judgment, for every idle word we speak*, Matth. 12. 36. That there needs no other cause of our last and heaviest Doom, then, *ye have not given, ye have not visited, &c.* Matth. 25. 41, to 46. That *the righteous shall scarcely be saved*, 1 Pet. 4. 18. That *many shall seek to enter in at the strait gate, and shall not be able*, Luke 12. 24. *That no unrighteous person shall inherit the Kingdom of God, but shall have their part and portion in that Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 21. Rev. 21. 8. *That except our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, (who were no mean men for outward and formal performances) *we shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; Mat. 4. 20. And *that without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. Yet most men live, as if the *Gospel* were quite contrary to the rule of the *Law*; as if *God* were neither to be feared, nor cared for; as if they were neither beholding to him, nor stood in awe of him, both out of his debt and danger: Yea as if there were no *God to judge*, nor *Hell to punish*, nor *Heaven to reward*. I cannot think of it without astonishment! Neither would men *speak* as they speak; *think* as they think, *do* as they do, if they thought

that

that their *thoughts*, *words*, and *deeds*, should ever come to *judgment*.

Yea, hear O heavens! be astonished O earth, and horribly afraid! that such a *Nation* so blest, and so long forborn, *should be so foolish and ingrateful*, as thus to *requite the Lord*. As consider with me, *God* of his goodness hath bestowed *so many and so great* mercies upon us, that it is not possible to express his bounty therein: For if we look *inward*, we find our Creators mercies: if we look *upward*, his mercy reacheth unto the Heavens; if *downward*, the *Earth is full of his goodness*, and so is the broad *Sea*; if we look *about us*, what is it that he hath not given us? *air* to breath in, *fire* to warm us, *water* to cool and cleanse us, *cloaths* to cover us, *food* to nourish us, *fruits* to refresh us, yea, *delicates* to please us, *beasts* to serve us, *Angels* to attend us, *Heaven* to receive us; and which is above all, *Himself, and his own Son*, to be enjoyed of us! Yea, *God* of his goodness, hath *removed so many evils from us*, and *conferred so many good things upon us*; that they are beyond *thought or imagination*. For if the whole World were turned into a *Book*, and all the *Angels* deputed *Writers therein*, they could not set down all the *good* which *Gods love in Christ* hath done us. And as much do we owe unto *God* for the dangers from which he *delivers us*: As for the *great wealth and dignities*, whereunto he hath alwaies *raised us*. Now we are infinitely bound to bless *God* for his *external*, *temporal*, *inferiour*, *earthly*, *perishing benefits*: How much more *then* should we praise him for the *lasting fruits* of his *eternal love* and *mercy*? as that we are not at this present *frying in Hell flames*, never to be freed; that we have the free offer of *Heaven*, and *eternal salvation*: How thankful should we strive to be? Nor could we possibly be unthankful, if we seriously thought upon *what God gives*, and *what he forgives*? And certainly, if a friend had given us but a *thousand part* of what *God* hath, we should heartily *love him all our lives*, and *think no thanks sufficient*.

But that we may the better consider, what *God* hath done for us, observe that when *man* was in a most *miserable* and *undone condition*, by reason of *original* and *actual sin*, and

of the *curse due to both*; being liable to all *miseries in this life*, and adjudged to suffer *eternal torments in hell fire after death*, having no possibility to escape the fierce wrath of Almighty God, who had already passed sentence upon him: When neither *Heaven*, *Earth*, nor *Hell*, could have yielded any satisfactory thing besides *Christ*, that could have satisfied *Gods justice*, and merited *Heaven* for us. Then, O then! *God* in his infinite *wisdom* and *goodness*, did not only find out a way to satisfie his *justice* and the *Law*; but even *gave us his own Son*, out of his bosom, and his *Son gave himself to die*, even the *most shameful*, *painful*, and *cursed death of the Cross*, to redeem us; *that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John 3, 16. A mercy bestowed, and a way found out, that may astonish all the sons of *men on earth*, and *Angels in Heaven*! Wherefore, O wonder at this you that wonder at nothing, that the *eternal God should die to redeem our worse then lost souls, that we might not die eternally*, and to bring salvation to us, even against our wils, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. O *the deepness of Gods love*! O the *unmeasurable measure of his bounty*! O *Son of God*, who can sufficiently *admire thy love*, or *commend thy pity*, or *extol thy praise*! It was a wonder that thou *madest us for thy self*; more, that thou *madest thy self man for us*; but most of all, that thou shouldest *unmake thy self*, that thou shouldst die to *save us*! But behold and stand amazed at the return we make of so many mercies! For whereas *God* hath *removed so many evils* (spiritual and corporal, temporal and eternal) *from us*, and conferred *so many good things upon us*; we by way of requital, have striven to multiply offences against him, and to make them as infinite in number, as his blessings. Loth I am to accuse my *Nation*, but Conscience compels me: for we are so far from loving and serving *Christ* for his unspeakable and unexpressible love, towards us; that *what he commands, we do the contrary*. Yea, we have done nothing from our infancy, but *added sin unto sin*; as *God hath added mercy unto mercy*. There is no *part*, *power*, *function*, or *faculty*, either of our *souls* or *bodies*, that is not become a ready instrument to dishonour their Maker. Even *every part do honour Christ, which yet would be glorified of him*. And as

if we had *contracted with the Devil*, that we would abuse all our *heavenly Fathers* gifts, so fast as they come: his *blessings* make us *proud*, his *riches*, *covetous*; his *peace*, *wanton*; his *meats*, *intemperate*, his *mercy*, *secure*; and all his benefits serve us but as weapons to rebel against him. As we have been *fatted with Gods blessings*, we have *spurned at his precepts*. Resembling the *Leopard*, who *wrongs* him *most*, that gives him most fodder. O my brethren! *Englands unthankfulness* hath striven with *Gods goodness* for the victory: as *Absolom* strove with *David*, whether the *Father* should be more *kind* to the *Son*, or the *Son* more *unkind* to the *Father*! As what think you?

That the road to *Hell* (a place so *woful* and *dolorous*) should be so exceedingly *thronged*, and the way to *Heaven* (a place so *blessed* and *glorious*) should be almost wholly *neglected*, Matth. 7. 13, 14. John 5. 19. Rev. 20. 8. That *Christ* should lay down his life to ransome and redeem men from *infinite*, *intollerable*, and *interminable torments*; and to purchase for them *such pleasures as never entred into the heart of man to conceive*: and yet *Satan* (that bloudy devouring Dragon, and vowed enemy of all mankind) should have more *Servants* and *Voluntiers* than *Christ*; and they do far more for him, than *Christs* servants do for their Lord! *Rev.* 3. 4. & 13. 16. *Rom.* 10. 12. That men supposed rational, should resolve to destroy themselves; that they should love damnation, that they should hate their own souls, as well as holiness, and the holy *God*; and all for sin and vanity, such a wretched emptiness; this is the greatest folly and *frenzy* imaginable; This above all, deserves *bitter lamentation*! yea, what *Sea of bloud*, is enough to bemoan this *foolish*, *wicked*, and *desperate madness*?

CHAP. III.

Quest. But will you know how it comes to be so? for the *Word of God* (in this as in all other cases) will acquaint us therewith.

Answ. Many Reasons hereof might be collected from the *Word*; but these few may serve.

Every

Every *man is born stark dead in sin*; and whereas the *Word preached*, is *spirit and life to quicken* those that are *dead* in sin, and to *raise up* those that are therewith *cast down*: they will either not hear the *Word*, (as I think I may say, that one half of the men and women in the *Kingdom* come not once a year within the *Church* doors: It were good they were *compelled to hear* this *Word of life*, which is the only ordinary means of salvation:) Or if they do hear it, they will not apply it to themselves, or be reformed by it; but contrarily resolve to continue their sins, until at length the custom and reiteration of sin, and rejecting the means, *brauns their hearts*, and *blinds their minds*, Jer. 13. 23. *They will not receive the truth in love, that they may be saved: Therefore are given up to strong delusions, to believe lies, that they may be damned*, 2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12. *They will not regard, nor retain God in their thoughts*; therefore God gives them over to a reprobate mind, *Rom.* 1. 28. They will not take the *Spirits counsel*, therefore the *Spirit gives them up to walk in their own counsels*, Jer. 9. 13, 14, 15. They think they have as good hearts as the best, and therefore they will follow that deceitful guide, *Ezek.* 14. 3, 4, 5. They will not by any means that *Christ* can use, *understand, nor be converted, nor saved: Therefore they shall not understand, nor be converted, nor saved*, Isa. 6. 9, 10. Matth. 13. 15. They will believe *Satan*, that promises prosperity to sin, yea, *life and salvation* (as the *Pope* promised to the *Powder Traytors*) rather than believe *God*, who threatens *Hell* and *damnation*, if men do not repent of, and forsake their sins: Therefore *God* delivers them up to *Satan*, so to be *deluded, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, shall not shine unto them*, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. Eph. 2. 2. 2 Thes. 2. 9, 10. Neither will they *believe what is written*, until they *feel what is written*. And therefore shall *fire and brimstone confute them*, because *nothing else will do it*. And let such take notice, that when men reject all good means, and refuse to serve the *just and true God*, provoking him by their rebellious and damnable wickedness: He in justice gives them over to *the false, namely, the god of this world*, to be taught and governed by him. Even as a

just

just Judge, having *past sentence* upon some hainous *Malefactor*, gives him up to the *Jaylor* or *Executioner*, as you may see by sundry places, as 2 *Thes.* 2. 10, 11, 12. 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. *Eph.* 2. 2. *John* 8. 44. & 12. 31. & 13. 2. & 14. 30. *Acts* 5. 3. 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. *Gen.* 3. 1, to 6, & 15. *Rev.* 2. 10. 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. 1 *Kings* 22. 20, 21, 22. Which being so, no wonder there should be *so many Atheists*, and *so few Christians* in this our *Goshen*, where hath been such preaching, that no people in the world enjoy the like.

True, they will not believe that *Satan* hath any power over them, no, they defie the *Devil*, and all his works: but if the *Word of God* be true, they *are the devils captives, at his command, and ready to do his will*: For *he rules over, and works in them his pleasure*, as the Apostle witnesseth, 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. *Eph.* 2. 2, 3. Yea, he enters into them, and puts it into their hearts what he will have them to do, *John* 13. 2. *Acts* 5. 3. 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. Opens their mouths, speaks in, and by them, *Gen.* 3. 1, 6. Stretcheth out their hands, and they act as he will have them, *Acts* 12. 1, 2. *Rev.* 2. 10. He being their *God*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. their *King*, *John* 12. 31. & 4. 30. and their *Father*, *Gen.* 3. 15. *John* 8. 44. Which being so, no wonder men should be so mistaken in judging themselves *Christians*; while they are indeed *worse enemies to Christ* and his *Gospel*, then are meer *Heathens*. No wonder when onely those that are spiritual, can judge of spiritual things. For *the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. 2. 14.

Again, it were impossible (were it not for the fore-going reasons) that in the midst of so much light, and means of grace so few should be converted: For otherwise *the Word of God* is so *powerful*, and the *Gospel* so *ravishing*, that the *world could* not stand before it without submitting to it. Yea, were it not for this, how were it possible, that *we* (who *are as traytors, condemned to suffer eternal torments in Hell fire*, being *only reprieved for a time*) should hear the *Gospel*, and *glad tidings of salvation* (day after day, and year after year.) *Which is the strong arm of the Lord, and the mighty power of God to salvation*, Rom. 1. 16.

1. 6. *Quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword,* &c. *Eph.*6.17. *Jer.*23.29,30. 2 *Cor.*10.4,5. *Heb.*4.12. And wherein *God offers us a pardon,* in tendering *Christ* unto us, upon the condition of *faith* and *repentance*; which is *such a spectacle of unspeakable mercy,* as might *ravish our souls with admiration?* and stand it out, and being so far from *accepting a pardon thankfully,* that we *refuse and contemn it*; yea, in a manner deride the offer: For we oppose the *Gospel,* and persecute *Christ* in his members, either with *hand* or *tongue,* or *both,* and are so far from imitating *Christ,* or observing his *precepts,* in being *holy* our selves, that we (most of us) hate and scoffe at holiness in others: Here is ingratitude, here is *foolish, wicked,* and *desperate madness with a witness!* And how could this be, were it not for the foregoing Reasons? Neither could men else, but *hate sin, and love holiness*: For (besides that any rational man, would rather *go to Heaven and be saved,* than *to Hell and be damned:*) even *Plato* a meer *Heathen* could say, that *vertue,* if it be clearly discerned, moves great love and affection: And that in case *a vertuous soul,* could but be *seen with corporal eyes,* it would ravish all men, and set their hearts on fire with love and admiration of the same.

CHAP. IV.

BUt you will ask me, who are such as may properly be called *Christians?*

Answ. Those that are rightly so stiled, do in some measure walk according to the *rules* and *precepts* of the *Gospel,* as these and the like, though with much infirmity. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, mind, and strength; and thy neighbour as thy self,* Matth. 22. 37,39. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even the same do ye unto them,* Mat. 7. 12, &c. He walks not according to the rudiments of the World, neither does he follow the example of the *greatest number,* nor the *greatest men,* nor the

greatest

greateſt Scholars, any farther then they follow *Chriſt*. But he *ſerves God in ſpirit*, according to *Chriſts Goſpel:* for ſo far forth as he can, he *lives* and *believes*, and *hears*, and *invocates*, and *hopes*, and *fears*, and *loves*, and *worſhips God* in ſuch manner as his *Word* preſcribes, without *addition*, or *diminution*. And having ſo done and performed his utmoſt, (not to deſerve by it, but to expreſs his thankfulneſs to *Chriſt* that hath *done and ſuffered* ſo much for him;) he *confeſſeth himſelf an unprofitable ſervant*, and that in all, he comes far ſhort of performing his duty, *Luke* 17. 10. If you would have a full and compleat *Character* of ſuch an one, for your imitation, and direction; or for a pattern to *know*, *believe*, and *live* by, read *The whole Duty of a Chriſtian* lately Printed for Mr. *Crips*. In the mean time know, that we are *not born, but new born Chriſtians*, by the immortal ſeed of the *Word*, and the *Spirits* powerful working with it. And when any one is new born, it will appear by this: *Regeneration or new birth is a creation of new qualities in the ſoul*, as being by nature only evil diſpoſed. In all that are born anew, is a *change*, both *in the judgment*, from *errour* to *truth*, and in the *will*, from *evil* to *good*, and in the *affections*, from *loving evil*, and *hating good*, to *love good* and *hate evil*; in the whole man, *from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*. Nor is there one of that ſmall number, whom *Chriſt* hath choſen out of the *World*; but is able to ſay, I bleſs *God*, his *Word and Spirit* hath wrought in me ſuch a change, and ſtrange alteration, that it hath *opened mine eyes* that were *blind before*, *inclined my will* to *obedience*, which before was *rebellious*, *ſoftened my heart*, *ſanctified*, and quite *changed my affections*: So that *I now love that good which before I hated*, and *hate that evil which before I loved*; and am *delighted* with thoſe holy exerciſes, which heretofore did moſt *diſpleaſe* me, and am *diſpleaſed* with thoſe vain pleaſures, and filthy ſins, which in time paſt did *moſt delight* me, and accounts the ſame ſuch a mercy, that no tongue is able to expreſs it.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

BUt to bring this home to our selves: Are none *Christians* but such as *imitate Christ*, and endeavour to make the *Gospel* a rule for them to walk by? then in the first place, they that are in their *judgments*, *affections*, and *actions*, quite *contrary to Christ and the Gospel* are far from being *Christians*. And of this number are all *Drunkards*, *Swearers*, and *Cursers*, all the *lascivious* and *voluptuous*, all *Adulterers* and *Fornicaters*, all *covetous*, *unjust*, and *unmerciful* men, all *Seducers*, *false Teachers*, and such as *err in Fundamentals*, or *hold damnable Opinions*; all *ignorant persons that know not God*, nor the very first *principles of Christianity*; which every one must of necessity know, or he cannot be saved, *Isa.* 27. 11. *Hos.* 4. 6. 2 *Thes.* 1. 7, 8. *Prov.* 19. 2. *John* 3. 19. And the number of these are numberless: all the *rebellious*, and *disobedient*, all *lyars*, *flatterers*, and *time servers*, who like those *Chaldeans*, Dan. 3. 7. would *worship a golden Image*, rather then for-go their immunities; all *open* or *secret enemies to the power of godliness*; as *scoffers at holiness*, and *haters of the good*, who are not a few; all *Idolaters*, *railers*, the *fearful* and *unbelieving*, *Sorcerers*, &c. who *shall* every one (if they repent not) *have their part and portion in the Lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*; as the *Holy Ghost* witnesseth, *Rev.* 21. 8. 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. All these I say, shew by their works, that they serve not the *Lord Jesus*, but their Father the *Devil*; and therefore ought not to be owned as *Christians*. For what saith the *Apostle*? *his servants we are to whom we yield obedience*, Rom. 6. 16. See more *Gal.* 5. 24. 2 *Pet.* 2. 19. *Mat.* 6. 24. *Luke* 1. 74, 75. So that it is an infallible argument, if we observe and obey *Christs precepts*, we are *his Servants*; if *Satans commands*, we are *his subjects and slaves*. Men may pretend what they will, but we are bound to believe the *God of truth*; and what saith Saint *John*, He that pretends interest in *God*, or *Christ*, *and keepeth not his commandments, is a lyar, and the truth is not in him*

him, 1 *John* 2.4,5. and in the third Chapter and eight verse, he affirms plainly, that all *wilful sinners* are the *Devils servants*. And indeed let men flatter themselves, or pretend what they will; it cannot be denied but the *fruit tells best, the name of the tree*. The *conversation* above all, shews who carries the bridle of the *will*, whether *God* or *Satan*. And did not men purposely *shut their eyes, stop their ears*, and *harden their own hearts, lest they should see and hear, and so be converted*, as our Saviour himself speaks, *Mat.* 13. 15. they could not but know, that the whole Bible beats upon this: It is St. *Pauls* everlasting rule, *Rom.* 6. 16. *Ye are his Servants to whom ye obey*: And St. *Peters* infallible Doctrine, 2 *Pet.* 2. 19. *Of whom a man is overcome, unto him he is in bondage*. And St. *John*, *In this are the children of God known, and the children of the Devil: Whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, but of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 8, 10. And after this manner does our Saviour reason with the Jews, *John* 8. 33, to 48. See then whose *commands ye do, Gods* or *Satans*; if *Satans*, then saith St. *John*, *Let no man deceive you through vain words; for he only that doth righteousness, is righteous, and he that doth unrighteousness, is of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 7, 8.

Now what can be spoken *more expres*, or *more full* to the point in hand? Nevertheless as the *Jews*, John 8. *thought we may put away our wives, we may swear, we may hate our enemies, we may kill the Prophets, subject the Word of God to our Traditions, and follow our own lusts*; and yet they most confidently believed, and stiffly *maintained that God was their Father*, verse 41. Though by their leave *Christ calls them Bastards, and finds out another Father for them*, verse 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the lusts of your Father ye will do*. As indeed they did not long after; for they *murthered the same Christ*, who was the *only Son of God*, which proved it sufficiently. Even so will the worst of men in these daies, boast themselves *Christians*. Such as do *nothing but sin, and make others to sin*: such as *glory in, and maintain their sins*.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

ONe *minds* nothing but *his cups*, another nothing but *his coine*, a third, nothing but *his Courtizan*; yet all theſe promiſe to meet in *Heaven*. Yea, there is *ſcarce a man on earth, but he thinks to go to Heaven.* Which yet is no wonder, if you conſider all. For what the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* 3. is appliable to all that are in their *natural condition: Their minds were blinded, for until this day remaineth the ſame Vail upon their hearts untaken away, in the reading of the Old Teſtament: which Vail, when they ſhall turn to the Lord, ſhall be taken away in Chriſt*, v.14,15,16. Neither do they ſpeak other than they think in this caſe; as being of, and holding that *reprobate*, and yet *common errour of* Unomius, *That faith without works* will ſerve. Onely *believe, and thou ſhalt be ſaved; no matter how men live.* Whence it is, they do not in the leaſt doubt but to *have beneſit by the Goſpel*, when yet they *will not be tied to the leaſt tittle of the Law.* Whence it is, that *moſt men walk in the broad way, and yet every man thinks to enter in at the ſtrait gate.* They will *boldly do what God forbids, and yet confidently hope to eſcape what he threatens.* But let all ſuch *read theſe two Scriptures and tremble:* The firſt is, *Deut.*29.19,20. where the Lord tels us expreſly, that *he will not be merciful, to ſuch as flatter themſelves in an evil way, but that his wrath and jealouſie ſhall ſmoak againſt them, and every curſe that is written in his Book ſhall light upon them*, &c. And the ſecond is, *Prov.*1. *That if we will not regard, nor hearken unto God when he cals upon us for repentance: he will not hear nor regard us, when in our diſtreſs and anguiſh we ſhall call upon him for mercy; but even laugh at our deſtruction, and mock when our fear cometh*, v. 24, to 33. See other places to this purpoſe, *Heb.*12.29. *Deut.*4.24. *Matth.*25.30,41, to 64. and 3.10. Theſe are *Scriptures that would ſtartle them, were they not ſtark dead*; but all is one, *God they* may *hear*, but *the Devil will they believe*, as it fared with our *Firſt Parents*, when they eat the *forbidden fruit, at the price of death eternal:*

eternal: Sin like Opium, brings them into a dead sleep, and in *sleeping* they *dream*, and suppose themselves *good Christians*: Even *as a Beggar may dream he is a King, or a Traytor that he shall be crowned, when he is to be beheaded*: and for the time be as much pleased therewith. And so in this case, whereof we have *three* most *remarkable instances* in the *New Testament*, the one *Rev.*3.17. another *Luke* 18,11,12. the third, *Mar.*10.19,20. Which examples sufficiently declare, that these mens *faith* is but a *dream*, their *hope* but a *dream*, their *obedience* but a *dream*, their whole *religion* but a *dream*, and so their *assurance of salvation* is but a *dream*. They have *Regeneration in conceit*, *Repentance* and *righteousness in conceit*, they *serve God well in conceit*, and they *shall go to Heaven only in conceit, or in a dream, and never wake untill they feel themselves in the flames of Hell*. And the truth is, were it not for *Pride* and *Ignorance*, a world of men would be ashamed to have their faces seen abroad. As, but take away from mens minds, *vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations*, and the like, you will leave *the minds of most men and women* but *poor shrunken things, full of melancholly, indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves*. O my brethren, take heed of *turning away your reason*, lest *by loss of conscience*, you become *Atheists*, and *by loss of reason, beasts*. As, what are these better than *beasts* for matter of *reason*? For suppose they are *as wicked as Devils in their lives*, yet this shall serve to blind conscience; *They have good hearts, and mean well*, whatever their lives be: When every wise man knows, that the *outward actions declare the inward intentions*: *A good conversion is proved by a good conversation*. Nor is there any evil in the *mouth*, or *hand*, which was not in the *heart* first of all; as the *stream* is first in the *Fountain*. *Out of the heart*, saith *our Saviour*, *proceed evil thoughts, murthers, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*, Matth. 15. 19. Yet we have good hearts, and mean well: Alas, poor ignorant souls! *for every drop of wickedness* that appears in the *life*, *there is an Ocean in the heart*. *The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*, Jer.17.9. and when a man thinks there is no deceit in it, even in that he

is moſt of all deceived. Inſomuch that every man hath need to pray, *O God defend me from my ſelf*; for *a mans own heart is as arch a traytor as any he ſhall meet withal*; *we truſt it too much, and know it too little*; as it fared with *Hazael*, 2 Kin.8.12,13. and *Peter*, Mat.26.33. and thoſe *Jews*, Act.2.36.

But though they know not their own hearts, yet *God* knows them, and others may know them: For *words and actions expreſs our hearts to men*, as *thoughts to God*: Why elſe does *our Saviour* ſay, *by their fruits ye ſhall know them*, Mat.7.16,20. And again more expreſly, *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh*, Mat.12.34. Yea, yet more fully, *A good man out of the good treaſury of his heart bringeth forth good things*; *and an evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things*, ver.35.

But beſides our warrant from *Gods word*; *the tongue is the bewrayer of the heart*, ſaies *Pythagoras*. *A man is by nothing better known, then by his communication*, ſaies *Seneca*. *The habit of the mind, is beſt perceived by a mans talking*, ſaith *Diogenes*. *He who cannot rule his Tongue, can much leſs rule his luſts*, ſaies *Socrates*. And another, *Evil ſpeaking diſcovers an evil heart, as the ſtriking of the clapper does a broken Bell*. Yea, it were ſenſeleſs to think the *Fountain pure*, when the *ſtreams that flow from it*, are *corrupt*; that *Garlick* ſhould grow out of a *Vine-ſtock*. That *Wine* ſhould be in the *Veſſel*, when only *Vinegar comes forth*. *Away then with that more fooliſh than common boaſt of a good heart, when the tongue is foul, and the life filthy*: For *when ſmoak comes out of the chimney, there muſt needs be fire on the hearth*. *When the floods of wickedneſs come guſhing out at thine hands and mouth, there muſt needs be a ſpring in thine heart which maintains them*.

CHAP. VII.

WHerefore take heed of flattering, or ſoothing thy ſelf up with a *vain and falſe hope*: which is much *more common* in the World, than that which is *ſound and good*; even as *baſtard Pearls* are *more frequently*

frequently worn then true Pearls are. And in case thou wouldest be *loosed from the chains of thy sins, and delivered from the chains of plagues*: That thou wouldst have the same *Christ, with his precious blood to free thee, that shall with his Word sentence others.* Then endeavour to become a true, and real Christian, and resolve so near as thou canst. to *obey Christ in all that he commands.* And indeed, *if Christ be formed in any, he destroyeth the devils power, which formerly he had in them.* Heb.2.14, 15. *and his wicked works,* 1 John 3.8. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,* 2 Cor.5.17. Wherefore *cease to do evil, learn to do well,* Isa. 1.16,17. For *fruitfulness* is the best argument that we are begotten anew. Nor can it be denied, but the *signs of salvation* are to be sought *in our selves,* as *the cause in Jesus Christ. Our Justification is to be proved by the fruits of our Sanctification:* and though *faith alone justifieth,* yet *justifying faith is never alone,* but ever accompanied with *spiritual graces, the beauties of the soul*; and *good works the beauty of graces:* Yea, they are *as inseparable, as the root and the sap, the sun and its light*; And as *fire* is to be discerned by *heat,* and *life* by *motion*; so a mans *faith* may be discerned *by the fruits of it.* Wherefore fancy not thy self to be a *Christian,* until thou beest one; and when thou art so, thou wilt (by help from above) endeavour *to bring into captivity every thought* and thing *to the obedience of Christ,* 2 Cor.10.5. 1 Joh.2,4. And indeed the very *end of Gods electing,* and of *Christs redeeming us, was that we might be holy,* Ephes. 1.4. Mat. 19. 17. *And therefore he binds it with an Oath, that whomsoever he redeemeth out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, they shall worship him in holiness and righteousness all the daies of their lives,* Luke 1.70. to 76. 1 Pet.2.24. They therefore that *never* came to be *holy,* were *never chosen, never redeemed*: Other Scriptures to this purpose are many; see only *Tit.*2.12,14. 1 *Pet.*2.24. *Mat.*19. 17. *Nor ought any indeed, to call upon Christ, or once to name him with their mouths, except they depart from iniquity.* 2 *Tim.*2.19 And take this for a rule, *If Christ be not our King to govern us, he will neither be our Prophet to forewarn, nor our Priest to expiate.* I speak this in hope, that *God* may

bless it to some one that shall read the same; but for the generality, *It is as meer lost labour to preach unto men the things of God, before they be truly humbled with the sight of their wants; as it is to offer light to a blind man, to speak to a deaf man, or to labour to make a brute Beast wise,* as *Cyprian* hath it.

CHAP. VIII.

THus I have proved, That all who walk contrary to the *Gospel*, are so far from being *Christians*, that they are *the Divils servants*, who in the end will *pay them* their deserved *wages*. I come now to shew who are *Christians in appearance only*, or *almost Christians*, and what their reward will be; the former, I fear, are two thirds of the Nation, these in all probability are two thirds of the Residue. And of this sort are, first, such as are *meerly civil*, or *moral*, because they take *morality* and *restraining grace*, for *piety and renewing grace*; *conviction* for *conversion*; *reformation* for *regeneration*. True *Morality* and *Civility* may commend us to men, like our selves, that see only the outside; but not to *God*, who knows the heart; nor will it bring us to *Heaven* and *Salvation*. They may suppose themselves in a good estate, but except they *be renewed, renounce their own righteousness, and seek to be justified only by Faith in Christ, and his righteousness: Thieves and Harlots shall go before them into the Kingdom of Heaven*, as our *Saviour* told their brethren the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who counted themselves just, and trusted to their own merits, *Matth.*21.31,32. *Luk.*18. 10,11,12. Besides, as *nothing* is *more easily broken, than that which is most hard*, so *notorious offenders* are nothing so hard to be *convinced* and *converted* as the *civilly honest*; which also greatens their misery, though their condition of it self is very deplorable: For all such are to know, that their very best services, as *praying*, and *fasting*, and *receiving*, and *giving of alms, &c.* (because they are not done in *faith* and *obedience to the Word*, and that *God* may be glorified thereby) are no better in *Gods* account, than *if they had slain a man*

or

or cut off a dogs neck, or offered swines blood, or blessed an Idol: as himself affirms, *Isa.* 66. 3. Nor will *God* accept of any action, except it *flow from a pious and good heart, sanctified by the Holy Ghost.* Yea, *civil honesty* severed from *true piety, humility, saving knowledge, sincere love to God, true obedience to his Word, justifying faith, a zeal of Gods glory, and a desire to edifie, and win others*; *God will neither accept, nor reward,* but account of their *moral vertues* as of *shining* or *glistering sins,* because they spring from *pride, ignorance, infidelity, self-love,* and other the like carnal respects, as many examples prove; namely, *Cains sacrificing,* 1 Joh. 3. 12. *The Jews fasting,* Isa. 58. *those Reprobates preaching in Christs name, and casting out Devils,* Mat. 7. 22, 23. and the like, whose outward works were the same which the godly perform. And what saith St. *Austin* most excellently, There is no *true Vertue,* where there is no *true Religion,* and that *conscience* which is not directed by the *Word,* even when it *does best, does ill*; because it doth it not in *faith, obedience, and love.*

Secondly, let them know, that being out of *Christ,* they are bound to keep the whole *Law,* Gal. 5. 2, 3. or stand liable to suffer the penalty thereof, for not keeping it. For though this be the condition of the *New Covenant, Believe, and thou shalt be saved*; yet all that they have to trust unto is, *Do this, and live,* Rom. 10. 5. And *cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them,* Gal. 3. 10. And I wish that they would seriously think of it, and what need they have of *Christ,* whom they *rather persecute, than obey his Gospel* in love.

Indeed, let them *get a true, lively, and justifying faith. Put ye off concerning the former conversation, the Old man which is corrupted, through the deceiveable lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds*; *and put on the New man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness,* Eph. 4. 22, 23, 24. and then *Christ and all his benefits and promises will belong unto you,* but not before. In the mean time, *you are in your blood,* Ezek. 16. 6. and have to answer not only for your *Original guilt,* but for every *thought, word,* and *action* of yours, from your infancy, *Matth.* 9. 12, 13. *Luk.* 1. 53.

Gal. 5. 1, to 7. enough to make you bethink your ſelves. And ſo much of *Civil* and *Moral* men,

CHAP. IX.

SEcondly, there are others, and not a few, that *ſeem* and *profeſs* themſelves real *Chriſtians*; when if they were well examined, and diſcovered, as *Jephta* once diſcovered, and diſtinguiſhed who were *Ephramites*, and who *Gileadites*, by their pronouncing the word *Shibboleth*, *Judg.* 12 6. It would be found, that the moſt of theſe alſo, are no more like *Chriſtians*, than *Michaels Image of goats hair* was like *David*. Many have *a form of godlineſs*, while they *deny the power of it*; yea, there are too many *titular Chriſtians*, who ſtand more upon the *outward appearance* of godlineſs, than the *inward eſſence*. Such as *ſeem*, and *are not*, *ſay*, and *do not*, *profeſs*, and *practiſe not*. Others there are, who be not only *great talkers* of Religion, but great *frequenters of holy exerciſes*? Yet altogether *neglect to practice the ſame*. Ezek. 33. 31. That like *ſick ſtomacks*, much do *ſwallow down*, but little do *digeſt*; that go to *Church* only *to be ſeen* there, and out of ſelf ends, that it may the more *inhaunſe their gain*, *increaſe their cuſtome*, or *to get credit* and eſteem thereby. Nor do they alwaies miſs of their aim; for for outward ſhew they come ſhort of none. Neither is there any duty done by a *Chriſtian*, but an *Hypocrite* may outſtrip him in it. Who may be reſembled to that unwelcome gueſt *the wind*; for as the *wind will counterfeit any diſeaſe of the body*, whether it be the *ſtone*, *gowt*, and the like; So theſe outſide and *formal Chriſtians* will counterfeit every *grace of the ſoul*, as *faith*, *zeal*, and the like; Yea, to the eye of the *world*, they reſemble *Moſcovia-glaſs*, which (though it be of little worth) is *as clear as Chriſtal*, *as tranſparent as air*; yea, the *Hypocrite* may not only paſs for a true *Chriſtian*, (as did *Judas*, *Annanias*, and *Saphira*, *Nicholas* the *Deacon*, &c.) but they will *ſeem to outſtrip them* in *goodneſs*, as *ſnow* does *ſalt* and *ſugar* in *whiteniſs*. And well they may, when their principal *care* is, only *to hide their defects*; as *Julius Caſar* were

Wore a garland of Baies only to hide his *baldness*. Nor can you blame their *discretion* therein, whatever you do their *honesty*: For,

Each cunning sin, being clad in virtues shape,
Flies much reproof, and many storms doth scape.

These have a form of godliness, but are the worse for it: For in that *they draw neer to God with their mouths, and honour him with their lips, when their hearts are far from him*: they are stiled *Hypocrites*, both by *Isaiah, cha.* 29.13. and our *Saviour, Mat.* 15.7,8. as well they deserve it: But there are yet far worse than these: yea, too many, who may be called *white Devils*: even such as *make Religion a stalking horse to villany, or a cloak to cozen the world unseen*. Such as shrowd *an Egyptian heart under the habit of an Israelite*; whose *life* and *profession* is a continual *incongruity*, and whose *works* are *antipodes* to their *words*: Their *profession being honey*, while their *practice* is *poyson*: Even such as *speak like Angels, live like Devils*: have *Jacobs voice, Esaus hands*: That like *Ethiopians* are *white in teeth only*, every way else *coal-black*; being *Christians in skin, Atheists at core*. *Judas* you know was *openly a Disciple*, but *secretly a Devil*. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were fair *Professors*, but *foul sinners*; for *they devoured widows houses under a colour of long prayers, Mat.* 23.14,28. Which grosser sort of *Hypocrites* may be resembled to some *wicked Ale-house*, that hath *Fear God, Be sober, Watch and Pray, painted upon the walls*: when there is nothing but *swearing, and drunkenness in the same*. To a *filthy Strumpet* with a *painted face*. To the Serpent *Requius*, that hath *scales as glorious as the Sun*, but *breath as infectious as the Aconite*. Or to the *Devil in* Samuels *likeness*.

But let these take heed, for as *dissembled piety is double iniquity*, so their plagues shal be double in that they most wofully *shame Religion by professing it, and make the way of truth evil spoken of*, 2 Pet. 2.2. Yea, as of old *the people abhorred the service of God*, and *became despisers of his worship, because those prophane sons of* Eli *were so wicked and scandalous*, 1 Sam 2.17. so do these. Yea, thou *Hypocrite*, thou *white Devil*: thy *ill life single, puls down more, than many good tongues can build up*.

CHAP. X.

I Grant there are of them so like *Christians*, (as to the *external parts of Christianity*) that it is no easie matter to convince them that they are not really such; for they have been *baptized, live unreprovably, pay their dues, pray in their families, are charitable, chaste, temperate, hear the best Ministers, repeat Sermons, instruct their children and servants*, with many the like; therefore they must needs be good and real Christians.

To which I answer, All this they may do, and yet be *but almost Christians*: For as *a child of God*, by looking more upon his sins, than his graces, more upon his failings, than his faith, more upon in-dwelling lusts, than renewing grace, may *think his condition very bad, when it is very good.* So the *sinner*, by looking more upon his duties than his sins, *may think his condition very good, and yet be in a wicked estate.* And the reason is, Many *mistake common grace, for saving grace*; through the resemblance that is between them. As many *take counterfeit money for current coin*; And as *Saul took the Devil for Samuel*, because he appeared in *Samuels likeness*: So many *take common gifts for saving graces*, because of the resemblance. And *this is the common Rock that so many souls split upon to their eternal hazard.* They take up a *form of godliness*, but deny the *power thereof*; And as many might have been *wise*, had they not so thought themselves; so many *a formal Professor*, might have been *a sincere Believer*, had he not mistook his *Profession* for *Conversion*, his *Duties* for *Graces*, and so rested in that for *Sincerity*, which is indeed but *Hypocrisie.*

A man may be *like, or almost a Christian*, and yet *not* be *a Christian.* A man may come *near to the Kingdom of heaven, and yet be ne're the nere. Thou art not far from the Kingdom of Heaven*, said our *Saviour* to *the young man*, Mark 12. 34.

There is an *external*, and an *internal worship of God.* There may be the *likeness of grace, without the life of grace.*

There

There is no grace but an *Hypocrite may have ſomwhat like it*; and there is *no duty done* by a *Chriſtian*, but an *Hypocrite* may *do ſomewhat like it*. A man may attain to many gifts, and ſeeming graces, and make a great progreſs in Religion; yea, *he may do all (as to external duties and worſhip) that a true Chriſtian can do, and yet be but almoſt a Chriſtian*: As obſerve what *God* ſaith, *Iſa.* 58. of that people; *They ſeek me daily, They delight to know my way, as a Nation that did righteouſneſs, and forſook not the Ordinances of their God: They aſk of me the Ordinances of Juſtice, They take delight in approaching to God*, ver. 2. yea, in the next verſe, *They were a people much in faſting, and afflicting their ſouls: Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt it not?* And yet for all this, they were no better than a *generation of Hypocrites*, as you may find if you read the Chapter.

Some neither hear nor do, as prophane ſinners; *ſome both hear and do*, as true *Believers*; *ſome hear but do not*, as hypocritical Profeſſors. A man may *believe all the* truths of the *Goſpel, all the promiſes, all the threatnings, all the Articles of the Creed to be true, and yet periſh for want of ſaving faith*. A man may be *converted from a courſe of prophaneneſs, to a form of godlineſs, from a filthy converſation, to a fair profeſſion and yet be but almoſt a Chriſtian*. A man may be *outwardly reformed*, and yet *not ſavingly renewed*, &c.

CHAP. XI.

BUt would you know, who are indeed *Chriſtians*, as Saint *Paul* was; and *who but almoſt Chriſtians*, as *Agrippa was*. Or rather wouldſt thou rightly know the ſincerity of thine own heart, of thy profeſſion, of thy Religion, (which as one would think, ſhould be the earneſt deſire of every ingenuous ſoul) then ask thy conſcience theſe queſtions. Art thou ſenſible how evil and wicked thou art? Doſt thou ſeriouſly lay to heart? Firſt, *the corruption of thy nature, by reaſon of Original ſin?* ſecondly, *thy manifold breach of Gods righteous Law, by actual ſin?* Thirdly, *the guilt and puniſhment due to thee for* them *both?*

And

And in caſe thou art truly ſenſible of thy *wretchedneſs*, it is a good ſign that thou art in ſome *forwardneſs* to be recovered. And indeed, *the very firſt ſtep to grace, is to feel the want of grace, and the neceſſity of a Redeemer.* And the *next way to receive mercy, is to ſee your ſelfe miſerable.*

Doſt thou find that the *Word* and *Spirit* hath wrought *an apparent change in thy judgement, affections, and actions, to what they were formerly?* Is *Chriſt thy greateſt joy, ſin thy greateſt ſorrow*, and *grace the prime object of thy deſires?* Art thou *as conſcientious alone* and in private, where *God* only ſees thee, as *if thy greateſt enemy, or all the World did behold* thee? Doſt thou make conſcience of evil thoughts? Grieve for thy unprofitableneſs under the means of grace? for the evil which cleaves to thy very beſt actions? And for ſins of Omiſſion? Whatever thou enjoyeſt on this ſide *Hell*, doſt thou think thy ſelf unworthy of it? Doſt thou *more fear the want of grace, than confide in what thou haſt*? Doſt thou endeavour to *leave every ſin*, and *make conſcience of every duty*? Doſt *thou make Gods glory the chief end of all thy actions*, and aims? Doſt thou deſire the converſion of others? Then my ſoul for thine, thou art *more than almoſt a Chriſtian.*

Again, *The love of grace in another* is *a good proof of the life of grace in our ſelves; a child of God cannot love a ſinner, as a ſinner*, Pſal. 15.4. Pro. 29.27. So *a ſinner cannot love a child of God, as a child of God.* Briefly, when a mans *heart* is *throughly renewed by grace, his mind ſavingly enlightned, his conſcience throughly convinced, the will truly humbled, and ſubdued, the affections ſpiritually raiſed, and ſanctified*; and when *mind*, and *will*, and *conſcience*, and *affections*, *all joyn iſſue* to help on with *performance of duties commanded*; then is a man *altogether a Chriſtian.*

But contrarily, he that takes up with *a form of Godlineſs, hating* or denying *the power* thereof, *is an Hypocrite, ipſo facto.* And let men take heed of that *ſin with two faces, and whoſe reward is the deepeſt place in Hell*: as appears by *Matth.* 23. And the rather, for that *wickedneſs does moſt rankle the heart, when it is kept in and diſſembled.* Beſides *the*

ſcab

ſcab of Hypocriſie does not ſeldom *break out into the plague ſore of Apoſtacy. Julian the Apoſtate* was firſt *Julian the Profeſſor.* To conclude, if thou findeſt not theſe notes of ſincerity in thy ſelf, let it be the earneſt deſire of thy ſoul, and thy principal endeavour to obtain the ſame. Otherwiſe, woe unto thee! For, *outward profeſſion*, where there is *want of inward truth, and real practice*, does but help to draw on, and *aggravate judgment*: The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had not heard of *ſo many woes*, but for their *glorious pretences*: and had the *Figtree* in the *Goſpel* been utterly bare and *leafleſs*, it had in all probability eſcaped the *curſe*. Thus *miſtake through ignorance*, is one great cauſe of many mens falling ſhort of their hopes, and of their being *but almoſt Chriſtians*, while they *think themſelves Chriſtians indeed.*

CHAP. XII.

BUt Secondly, *Pride* is *another cauſe*: We are ſo proud by nature, that we have *an eye to ſee our beauty*, but *not our deformity*; *our parts, but not our ſpots*; *our ſeeming righteouſneſs, but not our real naughtineſs*, our ſpiritual wretchedneſs. We have all for the moſt part *a ſelf righteouſneſs*; *Every man*, ſaies Luther, *is born with a Pope in his belly.* But it muſt be the *work of grace only*, that will *make us ſee our extream vileneſs*, and that will make us *acceptable to God*; and it muſt be *the work of grace, that muſt ſhew a man his want of grace.* It is the *Believers Motto, The leaſt of Saints, the greateſt of Sinners.* But the *Carnal mans Motto is, I thank God, I am not as other men.* Epheſ. 3. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Luke 18. 11. *But the only way to become good, is firſt to believe that we are evil.*

Thirdly, *Another cauſe is Lazineſs, and the love of the World*: *Almoſt thou perſwadeſt me to become a Chriſt*, ſaies *Agrippa* to *Paul*, but he could not find in his heart to become one altogether; for then he muſt live a more ſtrict life, and relinquiſh the worlds wicked cuſtoms. So *Balaam could be willing to die the death of the righteous*, but to part with his covetouſneſs, and *live the life of the righteous, he could not*

find

find in his heart: And therefore *Chriſt profited him nothing. Hell is to be had with eaſe, but the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers violence*, Mat. 11.12. *Many ſhall ſeek to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but ſhall not be able, becauſe they did not ſtrive*, Luk. 13.24. Yea, many run well in the way of Chriſtianity for a while, but they do not hold out, *Gal.* 5.7. But *perſeverance is the crown of all grace, and Heaven the crown of perſeverance.*

It is ſaid *of the truly righteous, he ſhall ſcarcely be ſaved*, 1 *Pet.* 4.18. And it is ſaid of the *ſeemingly righteous, he ſhall be almoſt ſaved*, 1 Pet. 4.18. Acts 26 28. *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God*, Mark 12.34. *As good not at all, as never the nearer; as good never run the race, as miſs of the goal, and prize we run for.* Wherefore content not thy ſelf with being almoſt a Chriſtian; but ſee thou beeſt one altogether, and in good earneſt: For *all who are but almoſt Chriſtians, ſhall be but almoſt ſaved; and to be ſaved almoſt, is to be damned.* We know *almoſt a ſon, is a baſtard; almoſt ſweet, is unſavoury. A Chriſtian almoſt, is like a woman that dieth in travail*; almoſt ſhe brought forth a ſon, but that almoſt killeth both *the mother and the ſon too: If thou believeſt almoſt, thou ſhalt be ſaved almoſt.* As we may ſay of a *Thief that hath a pardon brought him, whilſt he is upon the Gallows, he was almoſt ſaved, but he was hanged*, and his pardon did him no good. To be *almoſt a Chriſtian*, is to be like the *fooliſh Virgins, that had Lamps, but without oyl in them*; for which they were ſhut out of Heaven, though they came to the very door, *Mat.* 25.10,11,12. Wherefore it concerns all that would go to Heaven, and be *indeed ſaved*, to become *Chriſtians indeed, and in good earneſt.*

CHAP. XIII.

AND what I ſay unto theſe, I ſay unto all, as well *prophane perſons, and civil men, as to formal profeſſors*; yea, it were to be wiſhed, that *each man* that hath a ſoul, to live eternally in bliſs or woe, would *look himſelf in this glaſs, and try himſelf by this touchſtone.*

All

All that have any care of their own ſouls, or that prefer not *everlaſting flames of fire and brimſtone in Hell*, before *an eternal weight of ſuper-abundant glory in Heaven*: Nor will a wiſe man need much preſſing to this work; for what ſaith St. *Bernard*; *A wiſe man foreſeeth the torments of Hell, and preventeth them; only a fool goes on merrily, untill he feels them, and then ſaies, I had not thought.*

Now that every man ought to examine himſelf, we have the *Apoſtles* injunction, 2 *Cor.* 13. *Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the faith, prove ye your own ſelves; know yee not your own ſelves? How that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* Verſ. 5. And the neceſſity thereof is very great: For (as *Chryſoſtome* ſpeaks) *every particular man is either the child of God, and a member of Chriſt: or a child of the Devil*, John 8. 44. *Of the womans ſeed, or of the Serpents*, *Gen.* 3. 15. For there is not a mean between them.

Secondly, We ſhould the rather do it, becauſe there are but a few *that are real and ſincere Chriſtians*, here and there one, like *timber trees in a wood*; or *like gold and jewels among other ſtuff*: *Thoſe whom Chriſt hath choſen out of the World, to believe in his name, are but a ſmall number, a little Flock*, compared with the multitude, *Luke* 12.32. As do we not read, *That the greateſt number go the broad way to deſtruction; and but a few the narrow way, that leadeth unto life*, Matth. 7. 13, 14. *That the whole World lieth in wickedneſs*, 1 John 5.19. *That the number of thoſe whom Satan ſhall deceive, is as the ſand of the Sea*, Revel. 20. 8. *That all, both ſmall and great, rich and poor, free and bond, receive the mark of the Beaſt in their foreheads*, Revel. 13. 16. Whereas they that believe the Goſpel, are but few in number, Rom. 10.16. Iſa. 53.1. *That many are called, and but few choſen*, Matth. 20.16, and 22.14. *That though the number of the Children of Iſrael, are as the ſand of the Sea, yet only a remnant ſhall be ſaved*, Rom. 9. 27. *There were but ſeven righteous perſons in the old World. All Sodom afforded not ten. Elijah* ſaith, *I only remain a Prophet of the Lord, but Baals Prophets are Four hundred and fifty*, 1 Kings 18.

22.

22. *Micha complaineth of the multitude of the wicked in his time, and ſmall number of the faithful,* Mic.7.2. *Behold, ſaith Iſaiah, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for ſigns and wonders in Iſrael,* Iſa.8.18. and in Chap.53.1. *Lord who hath believed our report? Lord, ſaith Saint John, thou haſt but a few names in Sardis,* Rev. 3.4. *We read alſo, that the whole City went to drive Chriſt out of their Coaſts, not a Gadarean was found, that either dehorted his fellows, or oppoſed the motion,* Mat.8.34. *When Pilate asked, what ſhall be done with Jeſus? all with one conſent cried out, Crucifie him, crucifie him,* Mat.27.22. *There was a general ſhout for Diana for two hours together, Great is Diana of the Epheſians; not one man took Pauls part,* Act. 19.27, 28. *Yea the chief Jews told* Paul, *that his ſect was every where ſpoken againſt,* Act.28.22. How then does it concern every man of us, to bethink our ſelves, whether we be of that ſmall number, and to miſtruſt the worſt of himſelf; as all the wiſe and ſincere hearted do, witneſs the *Apoſtles, Mat.*26.22. And for want of this *many go to Hell, while they think themſelves in the way to Heaven:* As, why elſe did thoſe *Jews* ſo confidently boaſt themſelves the *children of Abraham?* when indeed they were the *Devils children, Joh.*8.44. And thoſe *Revel.*3.9. *ſay they were Jews,* when indeed they *were of the Synagogue of Satan,* as the *Holy Ghoſt* tells us. And ſo at this preſent, becauſe men are called after *Chriſts name, and wear his cogniſance;* they not once doubt, but they are *Chriſtians beyond all exception.*

CHAP. XV.

WHence it were to be wiſht, that a *ſeparation* were made, *between ſuch as ſerve Chriſt in ſincerity, and ſuch as ſerve him not; as* Jehu *made a ſeparation between the ſervants of God, and the worſhippers of Baal,* 2 Kings 10.23. This were the way to make men look into themſelves, But

Thirdly and laſtly, There can be nothing of greater conſequence to the careleſs: For are *Formal Profeſſors almoſt*

ſaved

ſaved, and yet periſh? Do you that are not ſo much as formal, ſtand and tremble. For if they that have gone beyond us, fall ſhort of *Heaven*, what ſhall become of ſuch as fall ſhort of them? *If he ſhall periſh who is almoſt a Chriſtian, what ſhall they do that are not at all Chriſtians?* If he that owneth and profeſſeth Chriſt, and leaves many ſins for Chriſt, may notwithſtanding be damned, what then ſhall his doom be, who diſhonoureth *Chriſt*, and *refuſeth to part with one ſin, one luſt, one oath for Chriſt? Nay, that openly blaſpemeth the precious name of Chriſt? And takes up arms againſt him, and all that worſhip him in ſincerity.* If he that is *outwardly ſanctified*, ſhall yet be *eternally rejected*, and ſhut out of *Heaven*; then ſurely the *filthy Adulterer*, the *Swiniſh Drunkard*, the *helliſh Swearer and Curſer*, the *prophane Sabbath-breaker*, the *foul-mouthed ſcoffer, and ſlanderer of the Saints* much more. If there be a woe to him that falls ſhort of Heaven; then how ſad ſhall their woe be, that fall ſhort of them that fall ſhort of Heaven? O that God would make the conſideration of this an awakening argument to *ſinners, that are aſleep in their luſts, without the leaſt fear of death, or dread of damnation!*

Now to wind up all with a word of exhortation; If by what you have heard, the *Spirit of God* hath ſtirred up in your hearts any good motions and reſolutions, to *receive with meekneſs the ingrafted Word, which is able to ſave your ſouls.* If you be convinced that you are not as you ſhould be, real *Chriſtians*, and do reſolve upon a new courſe; let your reſolutions be peremptory and conſtant, and take heed you harden not again, as *Pharaoh*, the *Philiſtins*, the *Young man in the Goſpel*, *Pilate* and *Judas* did. Reſemble not the *Iron*, which is no longer *ſoft*, then it is in *the fire*. Be not like thoſe that are *Sea-ſick*, who are much *troubled* while they are *on ſhipboard, but preſently well again when they are come to ſhore*: For *that good*, ſaith S. *Gregory*, *will do us no good, which is not made good by perſeverance.* If with theſe premonitions, the *Spirit* ſhall vouchſafe to ſtir up in your hearts any good motions, and holy purpoſes to obey *God*, in letting your ſins go; *quench not grieve not the Spirit*, 1 Theſ. 5.19.

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5. 19. *Return not with the dog to thy vomit, leſt thy latter end proove ſeven-fold worſe than thy beginning*, Mat. 12. 43, 45. as it fared with *Julian the Apoſtate*, and *Judas the Traytor*: Yea, as you tender the good of your own ſouls, ſet upon the work preſently; *Provide with* Joſeph, *for the dearth to come*; *and with* Noah, *in the daies of thine health, build the Ark of a good conſcience againſt the floods of ſickneſs: Imitate the Ant, that provides her meat in ſummer for the winter following.* Yea, do it while the *yearning bowels*, the *bleeding wounds*, the *compaſſionate arms* of *Jeſus Chriſt lie open to receive you*; whilſt ye have *health*, and *life*, and *means*, and *time*, to repent and make your peace with *God*: As you tender (I ſay) the everlaſting happineſs and welfare of your almoſt loſt and drowned ſouls. As you expect or hope for *grace* or *mercy*, for *joy* and *comfort*, for *Heaven* and *ſalvation*, for *endleſs bliſs* and *glory* at the laſt; As you would eſcape the *direful wrath of God*, the *bitter ſentence and doom of Chriſt*; *The never dying ſting and worm of conſcience*; *The tormenting and ſoul-ſcorching flames of Hell, and everlaſting ſeparation from Gods bliſsful preſence*; ſtrive after thoſe graces wherewith a true Chriſtian is qualified. Nor do I ask any more, but that you will *now hearken unto Chriſt, as you would have Chriſt another day hearken unto you.*

Only by way of *caution*, expect not that this ſhould be done by any power of thine own; For a *child* may as ſoon *create it ſelf, as a man in the ſtate of nature regenerate himſelf*, Eph. 2. 1. 2 Cor. 3. 5. We are *ſwift to all evil*, but *to any good*, *immoveable*. Wherefore as when *David came to fight with* Goliah, *he caſt away* Sauls *armour*; *ſo do thou in this caſe, caſt away all truſt and confidence in thy ſelf, and only ſet forward in the name of the Lord God of Iſrael*, and be ſure to uſe the means that God hath appointed, and that power which *Chriſt* ſhall give thee, and then he will not be wanting, on his part: *As in that caſe of the Prodigal Son*, Luke 15. 17, to 25.

Conſider what I have ſaid, and the Lord give you underſtanding in all things.

FINIS.